

Anne Askew, intituled, I am a VVoman Poor and Blind.



I Am a woman poor and blind,
and little knowledge remains in me;
Long have I sought, but faine would I find,
what herb in my Garden were best to be.
A garden I have which is unknown,
which God of his goodness gave to me,
I mean my body, where I should have sown,
the seed of Christs true verity.
My spirit within me is bered sore;
my spirit striveth against the same:
My sorrows do encrease daily more and more,
my conscience suffereth most bitter pain.
I with my self being thus at strife,
would faine have been at rest:
Pusing and rubbing in mortal life,
what things I might do to please God best.
With whole intent and one accord,
unto a Gardiner that I did know;
I went and desired him for the love of the Lord
true seeds in my garden for to sow.
Then this proud Gardiner seeing me so blind,
he thought on me to work his will,
And flattered me with words so kind,
to have me continue in blindness still.
He fed me then with lies and mocks,
for venial sins he bad me go:
To gibe my money to stones and stocks,
which was stark lies and nothing so.
With stinking meat then was I fed,
for to keep me from my salvation:
I had Trentals of Mass, and Balls of Lead,
not one word spoke of Christs passion.
In me was sown all kind of sained seed,
with Popish Ceremonies many a one:
Masses of Requiem, with other juggling deeds
still Gods spirit out of my garden was gone.
Then was I commanded most strally,
if of my salvation I would be sure,

To build some Chappel or some Chauntry,
to be pray'd for whilst the world doth endure.
Beware of a new learning (saith he) it is lies,
which is the thing I most abhor:
Meddle not with it in any manner of wise,
but do as your fathers have done before.

My trust I did put in the devils works,
thinking them sufficient my soul to save:
Being worse then either Jews or Turks,
thus Christ of his merits I did depraive.
I might liken my self with a woful heart,
unto the dumb man in Luke the eleven:
From whence Christ caused the devil to depart
but shortly after he took the other seven.

My time thus good Lord so quickly I spent,
alas shall I dye the sooner therefore?
O Lord I find it written in thy Testament,
that thou hast mercy enough in store.

For such sinners as the Scripture saith,
that will gladly repent and follow thy word,
Which I will not deny whilst I have breath,
for prison, fire, faggot, nor fierce sword.

strengthen me good Lord in thy truth to stand,
for the bloody butchers have me at their will,
With their slaughter-knives ready drawn in
(their hand,

my simple carcass to devour and kill.

O Lord forgive me mine offence,
for I have offended thee very sore,
Take therefore my sinful body from hence,
then shall I vile creature offend thee no more.

I would with all creatures and faithful friends
for to keep from this Gardiners hands,
For he will bring them soon unto their ends,
with cruel torments of fierce fire-brands.

I dare not presume for him to pray,
because the truth of him it was well known,
But since that time he hath gone astray,
e much pestilent seed abroad he hath sown.

Because that now I have no space,
the cause of my death truly to show,
I trust hereafter that by Gods holy grace;
that all faithful men shall plainly it know.

To thee, O Lord, I bequeath my spirit,
that art the work-master of the same,
It is thine Lord, therefore take it of right,
my carcass on earth I leave, from whence it
(came.

Although to ashes it be now burned,
I know thou canst raise it again:
In the same likeness that thou it formed,
in Heaven with thee evermore to remain.

FINIS.